

Exhibit A



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MAILED
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Technology Center 2100

In re Application of: Braun, et al.
Application No. 10/759,960
Filed: January 16, 2004
For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR A
DIRECTORY SECURED USER ACCOUNT

DECISION ON PETITION
TO MAKE SPECIAL
(ACCELERATED EXAMINATION)
UNDER M.P.E.P. §708.02 (VIII)

This is a response to the petition filed 16 January 2004, under 37 C.F.R. §1.102(d) and M.P.E.P. §708.02 (VIII): Accelerated Examination, to make the above-identified application special.

The Petition is **DISMISSED**.

M.P.E.P. §708.02, Section VIII which sets out the prerequisites for a grantable petition for Accelerated Examination under 37 C.F.R. §1.102(d) states in relevant part:

A new application (one which has not received any examination by the examiner) may be granted special status provided that applicant (and this term includes applicant's attorney or agent) complies with each of the following items:

- (a) Submits a petition to make special accompanied by the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(h);
- (b) Presents all claims directed to a single invention, or if the Office determines that all the claims presented are not obviously directed to a single invention, will make an election without traverse as a prerequisite to the grant of special status;
- (c) Submits a statement(s) that a pre-examination search was made, listing the field of search by class and subclass, publication, Chemical Abstracts, foreign patents, etc. The pre-examination search must be directed to the invention as claimed in the application for which special status is requested. A search made by a foreign patent office satisfies this requirement;
- (d) Submits one copy each of the references deemed most closely related to the subject matter encompassed by the claims if said references are not already of record; and
- (e) Submits a detailed discussion of the references, which discussion points out, with the particularity required by 37 CFR 1.111 (b) and (c), how the claimed subject matter is patentable over the references.

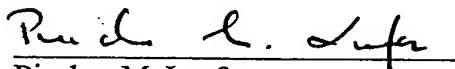
In those instances where the request for this special status does not meet all the prerequisites set forth above, applicant will be notified and the defects in the request will be stated. The application will remain in the status of a new application awaiting action in its regular turn. In those instances where a request is defective in one or more respects, applicant will be given one opportunity to perfect the request in a renewed petition to make special. If perfected, the request will then be granted. If not perfected in the first renewed petition, any additional renewed petitions to make special may or may not be considered at the discretion of the Technology Center (TC) Special Program Examiner.

The petition filed 16 January 2004 fails to adequately meet requirements (b) and (e) of the criteria set forth above. With respect to requirement (b), applicant has failed to make the statement that "Applicant will make an election without traverse as a prerequisite to the grant of special status if the Office determines that all the claims are not obviously directed to a single invention". With respect to item (e), there is no detailed discussion of the references to the extent required by 37 CFR 1.111(b) and (c). The discussion of the references is confusing. Petitioner states that the "claims recite limitations that are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the references." Petitioner then goes on to state that the references fail to disclose, teach, or suggest essentially all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and fail to disclose, teach, or suggest essentially all of the limitations of independent claim 26. It is not clear if these statements are intended to mean that none of the elements of claims 1 and 26 are disclosed by the prior art or that the entirety of claims 1 and 26 are not disclosed by the prior art. If the intent is the former, it would be difficult to conclude that the search was directed to the claimed invention if essentially none of the claim limitations were found in the prior art deemed "most closely related". If the intent is the latter, a statement that the entirety of the two independent claims is not disclosed by the six references purported to be "most closely related" is not a sufficient detailed description. Rather, the detailed discussion should be directed to how the language of each of the independent claims is specifically distinguishable and patentable from each of the references provided in requirement (d) above.

Petition to Make Special **DISMISSED**.

Petitioner is given one opportunity to perfect the petition. Any request for reconsideration must be filed within TWO MONTHS of the mail date of this decision.

Until the renewed petition is submitted, the application will be returned to the examiner's docket to await treatment on the merits in the normal order of examination.



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